

ABSTRACT

Methods and apparatus for controlling and retrieving messages from multiple voice mail systems used by a single individual are described. A voice messaging retrieval and forwarding (VMRAF) system checks a subscriber's voice message systems for messages, retrieves the messages and forwards them to the subscriber as attachments to E-mail files. E-mail replay messages are used to control deleting of the messages from the original systems. Prompt messages played to callers by different voice messaging systems before they leave a message can be updated automatically. This is done by indicating to the VMRAF system when one or more prompt messages are to be updated and which messages, from a set of prerecorded messages, are to be loaded into the voice message systems to replace the existing prompt messages. Accordingly, the VMRAF system facilitates message retrieval and the updating of prompt messages, e.g., on a preselected schedule or at preselected times.